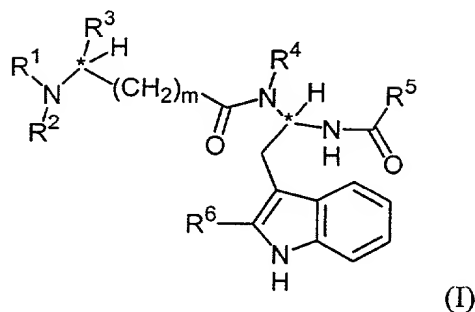


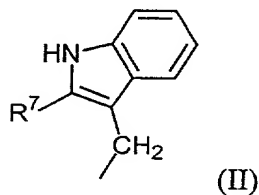
## THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

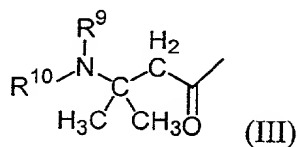
1. Compounds of the formula I

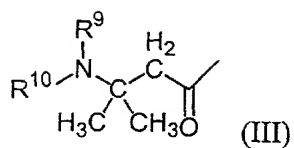


- 15 wherein \* means a carbon atom which, when a chiral carbon atom, has a R or S configuration, one of R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> is an hydrogen atom and the other is a group of formula II

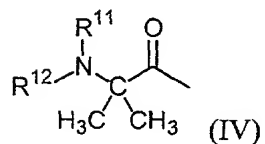


- 25 R<sup>2</sup> is a hydrogen atom, a linear or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl group, an aryl group, a heterocyclic group, a cycloalkyl group, a (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>-aryl group, a (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>-heterocyclic group, a (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>-cycloalkyl group, a methylsulfonyl group, a phenylsulfonyl group, a C(O)R<sup>8</sup> group or a group according to one of formulas III to VIII:

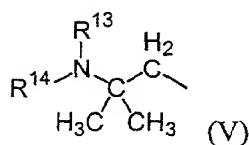




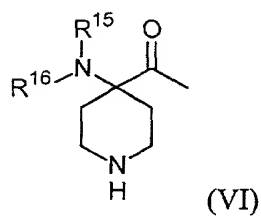
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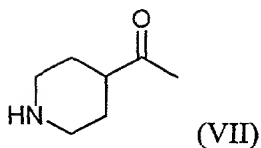
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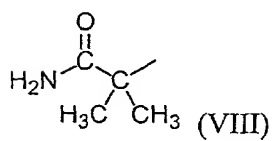
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$\text{R}^4$  is a hydrogen atom or a linear or branched  $\text{C}_1$ - $\text{C}_4$ -alkyl group,  $\text{R}^5$  is a hydrogen atom, a  
 35 linear or branched  $\text{C}_1$ - $\text{C}_4$  alkyl group, a  $(\text{CH}_2)_n$ -aryl group, a  $(\text{CH}_2)_n$ -heterocyclic group, a

(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub>-cycloalkyl group or an amino group, R<sub>6</sub> and R<sub>7</sub> are independently from each other a hydrogen atom or a linear or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl group, R<sub>8</sub> is a linear or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>-alkyl group, R<sub>9</sub>, R<sub>10</sub>, R<sub>11</sub>, R<sub>12</sub>, R<sub>13</sub>, R<sub>14</sub>, R<sub>15</sub>, and R<sub>16</sub> are independently from each other a hydrogen atom or a linear or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-alkyl group, m is 0, 1 or 2 and n is 1 or 2.

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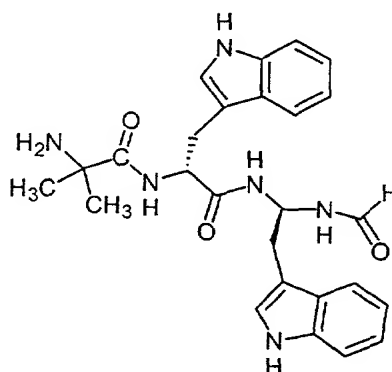
2. Compounds according to claim 1, wherein R<sup>2</sup> is hydrogen, R<sup>3</sup> is a group of formula II and m is 0.

3. Compounds according to claim 2, wherein the linear or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl group is methyl, the linear or branched C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl group is methyl, ethyl or i-butyl, aryl is phenyl or naphthyl, cycloalkyl is cyclohexyl and the heterocyclic group is a 4-piperidinyl or 3-pyrrolyl group.

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4. A compound which is

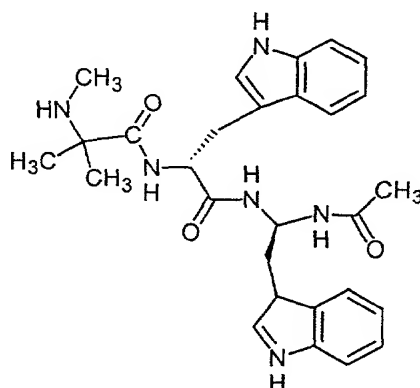
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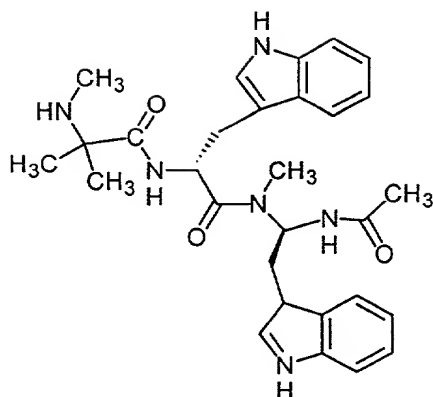
5. A compound which is

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6. A compound which is



7. A pharmaceutical composition, comprising a compound of claim 1.

8. The composition of claim of claim 7, in combination with a  
15 pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

9. The composition of claim of claim 7, in combination with an additional  
growth hormone secretagogue.

10. A method for elevating the plasma level of growth hormone in a mammal  
20 comprising administering to a mammal a therapeutically effective amount of a compound  
according to claim 1.

11. A method for the treatment of growth hormone secretion deficiency  
25 comprising administering to a mammal a therapeutically effective amount of a compound  
according to claim 1.

12. A method for the treatment of growth retardation in child comprising  
administering to a patient a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to  
30 claim 1.

13. A method for the treatment of metabolic disorders associated with growth  
hormone secretion deficiency, in particular in aged subjects, comprising administering to a  
patient a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1.

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14. A method for promoting wound healing, recovery from surgery or recovery from debilitating illnesses, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 1.

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